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The Work of Reconstruction.*

By Nicholas Murray Butler.

. . . We are a neutral nation, and the President has rightly enjoined us all to observe neutrality in speech and in deed. But neutrality is not indifference; it is not the neutrality of the casual passer-by who views with amused carelessness a fight between two street rowdies; it is the neutrality of the just judge who aims, without passion and without prejudice, to render judgment on the proved facts. We cannot if we would refrain from passing judgment upon the conduct of men, whether singly or in nations, and we should not attempt to do so.

In the first place, the moral judgment of the American people, as to this war and as to the several steps in the declaration and conduct of it, is clear, calm, and practically unanimous. There is no beating of drums and blowing of bugles, but rather a sad pain and grief that our kin across the sea, owing whatever allegiance and speaking whatever tongue, are engaged in public murder and destruction on the most stupendous scale recorded in history. This of itself proves that the education of public opinion has proceeded far, and, whatever the war-traders and militarists may say, that the heart of the American people is sound and its head well-informed. . . .

Next, it must not be forgotten that this war was made by kings and by cabinets; it was not decreed by peoples. I can testify that the statement that kings and cabinets were forced into the war by public sentiment is absolutely untrue, so far at least as several of the belligerent nations are concerned. Certainly in not more than two cases were the chosen representatives of the people consulted at all. A tiny minority in each of several countries may have desired war, but the militarist spirit was singularly lacking among the masses of the population. People generally have simply accepted with grim resignation and reluctant enthusiasm the conflict which in each case they are taught to believe has been forced on them by another's aggression. . . .

Again, a final end has now been put to the contention, always stupid and often insincere, that huge armaments are an insurance against war and an aid in maintaining peace. This argument was invented by the war-traders who had munitions of war to sell, and was nothing more than an advertisement for their business. Sundry politicians, many newspapers, and not a few good people who are proud to have their thinking done for them accepted this advertisement as a profound political truth. Its falsity is now plain to every one. Guns and bullets and armor are not made to take the place of postage stamps and books and laboratories and other instruments of civilization and of peace; they are made to kill people. Since war is an affair of governments and of armies, one result of the present war should be to make the manufacture and sale of munitions of war a government monopoly hereafter. This is a case where invasion of the field of liberty by government would do good, not harm. Then, too, the export of munitions of

war from one country to another should be absolutely forbidden. When that happens, the taxpayer will be able to see just how his money is spent and to check the expenditure, and the powerful war-trader, with his lines of influence in every parliament house and in every chancellery, will be eliminated.

It seems pretty clear that when the present huge supplies of guns and ammunition are used up in the contest now going on no civilized people will ever again permit its government to enter into a competitive armament race. The time may not be so very far distant when to be the first moral power in the world will be a considerably greater distinction than to be the first military power or even the second naval power, which latter goal is so constantly and so subtly urged on the people of the United States. How any one, not fit subject for a madhouse, can find in the awful events now happening in Europe a reason for increasing the military and naval establishments and expenditures of the United States is to me wholly inconceivable.

Another great gain is to be found in the fact that no one is willing to be responsible for this war. Every combatant alleges that he is on the defensive, and summons his fellow-countrymen who are scientists and philosophers to find some way to prove it. The old claim that war was a part of the moral order, a God-given instrument for the spreading of enlightenment and the only real training school for the manly virtues, is just now in a state of eclipse. Each one of the several belligerent nations insists that it and its government are devoted friends of peace, and that it is at war only because war was forced upon it by the acts of some one else. As to who that some one else is it has not yet been possible to get a unanimous agreement. What we do know is that no one steps forward to claim credit for the war or to ask a vote of thanks or a decoration for having forced it upon Europe and upon the world. Everybody concerned is ashamed of it and apologetic for it.

. . . In the Europe of tomorrow there will be no place for secret treaties and understandings, for huge systems of armed camps and limitless navies, for sleepless international enmity and treachery, for carefully stimulated race and religious hatred, or for wars made on the sole responsibility of monarchs and of ministers. Moral, social, and political progress will refuse longer to pay the crushing tolls which a conventional diplomacy and an unenlightened statesmanship have demanded of them. It is not the Slav or the Teuton, the Latin or the Briton, the Oriental or the American who is the enemy of civilization and of culture. Militarism; there is the enemy!

The first notable victim of the Great War was the eloquent and accomplished French parliamentarian, M. Jaurès. He was murdered by a war-crazed fanatic. In the course of a long and intimate conversation with M. Jaurès shortly before his tragic death he dwelt much on the part that America could play in binding the nations of Europe together. He spoke of the success of the policies that had been worked out here to make the United States and Germany and the United States and France better known to each other, and he thought that through the agency of the United States it might eventually be practicable to draw Germany and France together in real trust and friendship. As we parted his

*From the address of President Butler at the opening exercises of the academic year of Columbia University, September 23, 1914.

last words to me were: "Do not leave off trying. No matter what the difficulties are, do not leave off trying." Today the words of this great socialist leader of men seem like a voice from beyond the grave. They are true. We must not leave off trying. When exhaustion, physical and economic, brings this war to an end, as I believe it will at no distant day, the task of America and Americans will be heavy and responsible. It will be for us to bind up the war's wounds, to soften the war's animosities, and to lead the way in the colossal work of reconstruction that must follow. Then if our heads are clear, our hearts strong, and our aims unselfish—and if our nation continues to show that it means always to keep its own plighted word—we may gain new honor and imperishable fame for our country. We may yet live to see our great policies of peace, of freedom from entangling alliances, of a world concert instead of a continental balance of power, of an international judiciary and an international police, of international co-operation instead of international suspicion, generally assented to, and as a result the world's resources set free to improve the lot of peoples, to advance science and scholarship, and to raise humanity to a level yet unheard of. Here lies the path of national glory for us, and here is the call to action in the near future.

Men and Women of All Nations.

By George Howard Gibson.

The nations of the world must learn that they are not natural foes, but friends; that their interests are not antagonistic. The contending camps of Europe, if of equal military strength, would merely destroy each other. And if one side proves stronger than the other, what it gains by conquest it will lose through the hate of the conquered. This war is the supremest folly—and it must be made the last.

What is the necessary basis of lasting peace? Is it not—

1. An end of autocratic power. By every nation recognition of the equal natural rights of its citizens—one man, one vote—majority rule.

2. The democratization of education. Unlimited free schools, made accessible to all.

3. Free press. Free speech. The right of peaceful assembly granted.

4. Local self-government.

5. In place of the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente, the united nations of Europe, each nation to be represented by two judges in an international court at The Hague; each also to be represented in an international economic body whose work shall be to study mutual interests and promote exchanges.

The united nations of Europe would not need great armies and navies. National danger and fear would no longer exist.

When this most awful of wars has at last prostrated the nations they will welcome peace. They will ask President Wilson to mediate. And it will be his opportunity to press home upon their reason the rights of men and the need of the nations for an international organization into which every liberty-loving civilized State may enter.

Peace can rest securely only upon justice. Justice, though not yet realized by any, is in process of attain-

ment by many nations through free discussion and the use of the ballot.

In place of the secret national agreements and the continuous struggle to balance and overbalance grouped military power, which has had to culminate in this awful mutual destruction and desolation, international interests and the international spirit must succeed by means of an open international alliance. But autocratically ruled nations cannot be allied with and upheld by democracies.

The union of nations committed to universal suffrage and majority rule is a union which would free each from the fear of outside attack and protect each in an unlimited national development—industrial, commercial, cultural—until the whole earth should come to be scientifically utilized for the well-being of mankind.

The United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, England, France, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Japan, and other advancing nations, now or in the near future should be ready to enter an international federation of peace and progress.

Away with the barbaric idea that national borders divide interests, and must make enemies!

Let free schools, a free press, and universal suffrage be made the standard of civilization—the entrance requirement in an international federation—and let us establish peace.

The Back Fence.

By Edgar Laurens Hamilton.

"Casey," sez I, "an' what do ye think that ould fule Mahoney be after doin' now?" "Faith an' how should I be knowin' what all the ninnies in town be up to, me jewel?" sez he. "An' what did the idjit do this time?" "Sure he's gone and bought a gun. I see him luggin' the ould relic into the woodshed just now." "The devil an' all," sez Casey, "an' what does he want of a gun?" "I'll bet ye," sez I, "he's manin' to shoot that little red hin of yours whin she slips thru the back fence into his pratinis." "If he does," sez Casey, "I'll shoot the head an' tail off that ould black tom cat of his that's always prowlin' round me swill tub."

Wid that Casey goes down town to his wurruk, him bein' hod-carrier for Pat Lannigan on the new opery house. At night he comes in wid a rifle on his arm. "What have ye got there, Casey?" sez I. "Sure an' 'tis a rifle," sez he, "that's been thru the wars an' been retired on a pision by the governmint, but 'twill shoot as straight as iver. It's killed a hundred Injuns, an' I'll bet 'twill lay out Mahoney's cat all right." "Whare did ye get it?" sez I. "I bought it off a Jew be the name of Levi Solomon, that keeps the imporium on Salen strate. He has all manner of guns, mostly like this, but just as good for killin' cats as the new wans the army has."

Next evenin' I goes out to meet him as he comes stollin' up the strate smokin' his jimmy pipe. "O Casey," sez I, "would ye belave it that iligint neighbor of yours come home a luggin' a pistil just now? He tuk it in the house not tin minutes ago." "An' what for could he be wantin' wid a pistol?" sez Casey. "He's got wan gun already, an' that's enough for all the sport-